

## Hundreds Moved to Audition for Santa Ana Dance School

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Mindy Schauer, Orange County Register

More than 350 low-income children and their families lined up Saturday outside The Wooden Floor dance organization in Santa Ana, with hopes of securing a one-in-70 spot where 375 dancers are already enrolled. Some, like Iran Gomez, 9, and her mom Lupe, arrived before the sun.

"I love to move a lot. It's just so much fun when you dance with energy. If you don't dance with energy, you don't dance," said Iran who seemed to have no trouble balancing an imaginary glass of water on her head or becoming a piece of seaweed in the ocean during her audition.

General manager Dawn Reese said faculty members were looking for enthusiasm and "a desire to dance."

Students also must meet the financial requirements. Children selected will take twice-weekly lessons starting in ballet and moving on to modern, African and improvisational dance. They will also have an opportunity to audition for a concert where they will work with renowned choreographers, said Nathan Lammers, communications assistant.

Since 2005, 100 percent of The Wooden floor graduates finished high school on time and enrolled in college, outperforming their peers three-fold nationwide, he said.



Girls introduce themselves with a short dance during auditions for The Wooden Floor dance organization in Santa Ana on Saturday. More than 200 applicants were expected to turn out for a chance of getting one of 70 spots in the year-round program.



Iran Gomez, 9, center, lets loose on the dance floor during Audition Day for The Wooden Floor dance organization. About 70 low-income children will be selected for the year-round dance academy. Dozens of families lined up as early as 2:20 am Saturday.



Leah Alston, 11, looks for her mom out a second floor window where she was getting ready to audition for The Wooden Floor dance organization in Santa Ana Saturday. Leah, who said she wasn't nervous, arrived at 5 a.m. in hopes of getting a spot in the year-round school.



Iran Gomez, 9, is reunited with her mom, Lupe Gomez, after auditioning for The Wooden Floor dance organization. "I love to move a lot. It's just so much fun when you dance with energy," said Iran.



The first wave of performers wait to audition at The Wooden Floor in Santa Ana in hopes of securing a one in 70 spot at the dance organization for low-income families.



Feet and hands prepare to dance at Auditions Day at The Wooden Floor dance organization in Santa Ana on Saturday.



Sun casts shadows inside The Wooden Floor dance organization where a few hundred low-income children were expected to audition for a spot at the school.



The Wooden Floor dance coordinator Gina Quintana, leads children in dance moves as they audition for a spot at the organization in Santa Ana on Saturday.



Families form a line around The Wooden Floor dance organization, some arriving even before the sun, in hopes of securing a one in 70 spot for their child at the Santa Ana school.



Judges at The Wooden Floor huddle together as they select applicants for their dance program. General manager Dawn Reese said they were looking for children who "have a desire to dance" and an "enthusiasm for movement."



Children wait their turn to audition for The Wooden Floor dance organization in Santa Ana on Saturday.



Seven-year-old Alina Perez tumbles and rolls as she competes for a spot at The Wooden Floor, a dance program for low-income families.



It's a free-form free-for-all during try-outs for The Wooden Floor dance organization where children were encouraged to express themselves through movement.



Iran Gomez, 9, tries dazzling the judges with her dance moves and enthusiasm during The Wooden Floor auditions Saturday.



Auditions for The Wooden Floor's year-round dance school take place at the Santa Ana school where children performed free-form dance.



A boy makes his way across the dance floor as he tries out for a spot at The Wooden Floor in Santa Ana.



Jamile Moreles, 10, and her mom Alicia Niri, center, wait in line for more than an hour outside The Wooden Floor in Santa Ana where more than 200 low-income children were expected to audition for a spot at the school.



The Wooden Floor judges Jenn Bonfil, left, and Rebeca Ramos, check out the moves of dancers during Audition Day on Saturday.



Judges at The Wooden Floor look over a group auditioning Saturday at the dance school in Santa Ana.



Amy Acosta, left, and Elizabeth Robledo, both 7, dance in front of the judges during Audition Day at The Wooden Floor in Santa Ana.